

## **Diabetes Tool Box Medication Management**

This section is designed to introduce the learner to managing the medications used to treat diabetes.

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This educational material was developed using information from the following sources: The American Diabetes Association, The American Association of Diabetes Educators, The American Dietetic Association, and the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists. As with any medical information, this is not to take the place of your provider's recommendations. Be sure to consult your healthcare provider regarding your individual diabetes treatment plan.

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## Medication Management Tips

### Keep a current list of your medications

- ☐ Know what your medications are
- ☐ Know why you are taking them
- ☐ Know how to take them
- ☐ Know what to expect from them (both good and bad effects)
- ☐ Include any over-the-counter (OTC) or herbal medications that you take



Take this list with you to each visit your provider or the hospital. Do not assume your doctor or other health care providers are aware of all of your current medications.

### Tips for medication management

Ask your provider or a clinical pharmacist for help to simplify your medication schedule. You should know what medications you can take together, and which can be taken with food.

Some medications can affect your blood sugar medications OR can directly affect your blood sugars. Many over the counter or herbal products can also affect your blood sugars and interfere with your medications. Do not take any other pills or supplements without consulting your provider or pharmacist.

Use a pillbox (often called a MEDISET™) as a 7-day reminder of what and when to take medications, and when you need to reorder them.

If you are visually impaired or have any other disabilities (such as a recent stroke, amputations, and hand tremors) that would make it difficult for you to use standard equipment, please alert your health care provider. The VA has diabetic educators, low vision experts, and rehab specialists who can help you with special equipment or other resources.

If you are unsure about a medication please ask to speak with a professional who knows about medications!



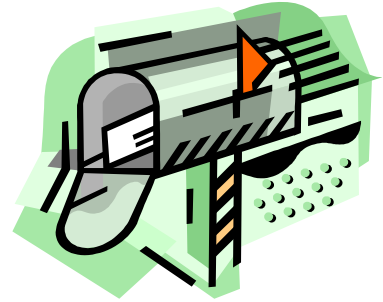
See the Medication List page 8

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## Ordering renewals and refills

Your prescriptions will automatically expire each year. You can refill or renew your medications using the automated prescription phone line. Remind your provider to renew your medications at your regular appointments.

The Portland VA encourages you to get your refills mailed. As soon as you receive your medication, re-order it. Send in the slips that you receive with your order. It will be sent to you before you run out.



The automated phone line is the fastest manner to refill or have a prescription renewed that has no more refills

Allow at least 2-3 weeks for processing and delivery.

**Remember:** Do Not Let Your Medications Run Out. Call the VA Northwest Network Call Center, if you have not received your medications.

## Common Diabetic Drugs used by VA

Type of Medication	Name	Medication Sizes	Usual Daily Dose
Sulfonylurea – Helps the pancreas put out more insulin	Glyburide	1.25, 2.5, 5 mg	5 mg to 10 mg
	Glipizide	5, 10 mg	5 mg to 20 mg
	Glimiperide	1, 2, 4 mg	1 mg to 8 mg
Biguanide – Helps the body especially the liver and muscles be more sensitive to	Metformin	500, 850, 1000 mg	1000 mg to 2000 mg
Alpha Glucosidase Inhibitor – Helps to block the action of carbohydrates	Acarbose	25, 50, 100 mg	25 mg 3 times a day, up to 100 mg 3 times a day
Thiazolidinedione – Helps to make the body more sensitive to insulin. Sometimes takes up to 3 months to see the full effect	Rosiglitazone	4, 8 mg	4 mg to 8 mg
Replaces the body's own insulin. Some insulins work in a couple of minutes, others take all day. Types of insulin include the following: NPH Regular 70/30 Glargine Aspart	Insulin	U-100 U-500	Variable, depending on blood sugars and patient's lifestyle. May be once daily, or may be multiple injections

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## **Important Things To Remember If You Are Taking These Diabetes Medicines**

### **Metformin**

1. If you are taking the medication called Metformin, also called Glucophage, you need to follow some special instructions.
  - a. When you have surgery or X-ray procedures using dyes, do not take Metformin the day of your procedure. Talk to your provider when to restart your Metformin after these procedures.
  - b. When you are acutely ill with nausea and vomiting, stop Metformin and contact your provider for further instruction.
2. A rare, serious condition called lactic acidosis can occur, when your tissues do not get enough oxygen to survive. To avoid this problem, Metformin should be used with extreme caution for people with kidney or liver disease, severe heart failure, or a history of alcohol abuse. It is important to tell your doctor if you have any of these conditions. In these cases, your provider may decide that Metformin is not the best choice for you.
3. It is very important to get your kidneys checked regularly. If you do not have your lab tests done routinely, you may be taken off this medication. You will not receive any refills of this medication until you get your lab tests done.



### **Acarbose**

1. If your blood sugars go below 100 while on this medication, you need to treat your low blood sugar in a special way.
2. With this medication you must treat low blood sugars with a “simple” sugar source such as dextrose, lactose, fructose, because this medication prevents “complex” sugars like sucrose from being absorbed.
3. Do not use table sugar, candy bars or similar sweets. These contain sucrose. Instead use orange juice (fructose), DEX4 tabs (dextrose), or milk (lactose).

### **Rosiglitazone**

1. This medication can affect your liver. When you start taking this medication, you will have to get a routine blood test. This test will tell us how your liver is working.
2. By repeating this test, your provider can watch for any changes in your liver is function.

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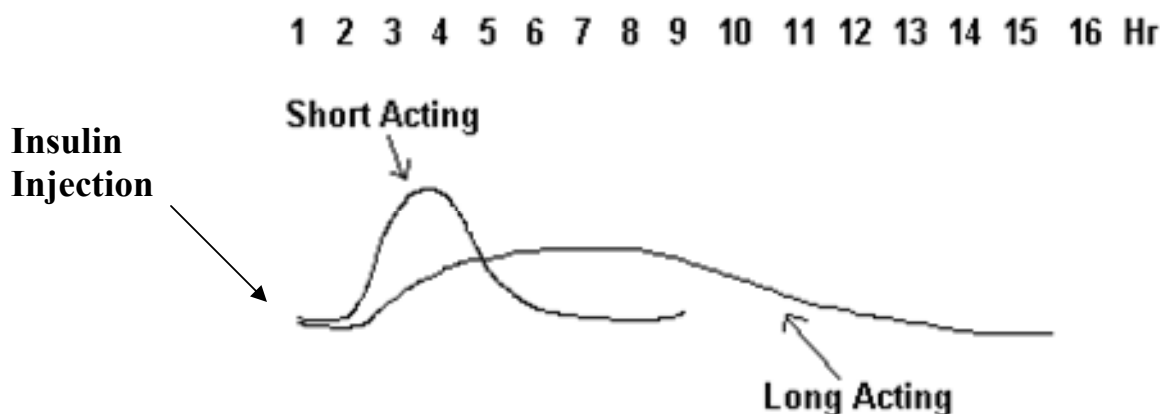
## Diabetes Medicines, continued

3. It is very important to get these lab tests regularly. If you do not have your lab tests done routinely, you may be taken off this medication. You will not receive any refills of this medication until you get your lab tests done.
4. In rare cases this medication may be associated with serious liver problems. You need to immediately report any type of nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, fatigue, dark urine, or yellowing of the skin. These may be signs of a serious liver problem.
5. Call also if you notice any new swelling in your legs.

### Insulin

1. If you are on insulin, and your blood sugars go too high for no reason, check your injection sites for abnormal signs such as scarring, or changes in the skin indicating problems with absorption. Also, consider changing your insulin bottle, if it has been open too long, contaminated or exposed to excessive heat or cold. This may mean that the insulin has been damaged.
2. If you have trouble seeing the numbers on the syringe, there is a type of magnifying glass called a Magni-Guide™ that may help you read the insulin markings on the syringe more easily.
3. Always have emergency sugar tabs available and wear a medic alert™ ID.
4. Insulin comes in different strengths and works better at different times. This chart compares short acting insulin to long acting insulin. It shows how long the insulin is active and when it will reach its peak action.

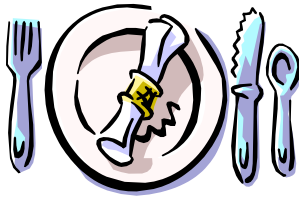
**How long it takes insulin to work**



Ask to see a clinical pharmacist for more information or questions on your medications. Learn all you can about your medications and keep updated.

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## Ways to Manage My Diabetes



**Food**



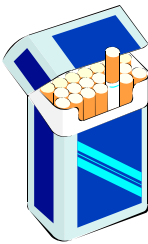
**Activity**



**Foot  
Exams**



**Check Sugars**



**Smoking**



**Alcohol**



**Check Ups**



**Other  
Things**

These topics are very important to your health. No patients do these perfectly. It's best to work on one at a time. You won't be pushed into changing. Which one do you want to discuss?

**1. My diabetes:**

A1C goal: \_\_\_\_\_ My Lipid goal: \_\_\_\_\_ My BP goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. My specific goal is to:**

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**3. The steps I plan to take in changing are:**

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## Ways to Manage My Diabetes, continued

4. **Challenges that might interfere:**

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5. **How I will handle these challenges:**

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6. **I will know my plan is working if:**

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**Remember:** Ask for help to identify some reasonable goals



## My Medication List

	Drug/Medication or OTC * Supplements	How I take it	When I take it	Why I take it
Ex	<i>Happypill 5 mg</i>	<i>2 pills twice daily</i>	<i>6am and 6pm</i>	<i>For my attitude</i>
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